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Continuous training process *stricto sensu*: the meanings built by the teaching staff from private teaching in colleges facing the legal demands

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Abstract

This paper has as objective to understand the meanings that professors in a private environment, establish about the teaching training in post-graduation courses *stricto sensu*. So as to do it, we decided to base on a Theoretical-methodological concept which was discourse analysis referential, presenting Orlandi in the French segment. The choice for this instrument which seeks for the meanings that goes beyond of what is said, the explicit; it demands an understanding of the context where it was produced and a deconstruction of the remaining discourses in the week of meanings which are present in the silence. As a result we could find: the discourse of degree and the discourse of training, demonstrating a dispute in the discursive field.

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1. Introduction

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Do the courses of *stricto sensu* formation guarantee a docent formation or only the further learning of specific knowledge? Are teachers, when looking for these courses, after a *preparation*, as specifies the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education- nº. 9.394/96- or after a *formation*, as literature points out as necessary to the teacher of high education?

The difference between preparation and formation for teaching inserts itself in the field of professional identity, as Aragón emphasizes (2000).

In this paper, the formation presents itself as an analysis category. In addition, as says Saul (1996), formation is a development process that accompanies all human beings' lives. Being so, we establish as a theoretical- methodological base the Discourse Analysis (DA), in the perspective of Orlandi (1998), which presents itself as a possibility of understanding the process of construction of discourse about the necessity/demand of high education teachers' formation.

This paper is hence structured: in the first section, there are the general questions about docent formation and in the following one the presentation of the theoretical-methodological path. The third section has the research data, split in two items: profile and teachers' discourses. At the end, the final considerations.

2. Docent Formation

We understand that formation presents itself as an important element that can contribute to the docent professionalization. The debate about professionalization makes emerge the formation, because the profession defines itself by its practices, by the establishment of rules and by the knowledge of the undertaken activity, as says Sacristán (1995).

The profession is built in a knowledge considered legitimate, which supports itself on a social practice, when specific knowledges are taught and shared with those who intend to insert themselves in a determined group, and that identify themselves with the group in the development of a specialized activity, socially recognized.

The debate about the teacher's professionalization involves formation, career, self-regulation (deontology- ethic code) and professional knowledges, those built through and in the profession, "that imply articulations between practical knowledges and technical knowledges, which are at the centre of the identity structured by the job" [author's translation] (Dubar, 1997, p.238).

In the ambit of studies and productions on professionalization, the formation of the education professional has been becoming an element increasingly relevant, result of observations and debates in several fields of knowledge, such as Sociology and Pedagogy.

About the high education teacher's formation, this is a constant movement of seeking, of seeing and re-seeing oneself as subject and part of a whole.

We add that the end of the XX century and beginning of the XXI century point out to the necessity of a new professional. It is demanded then a professional no longer fragmented or disciplinary, but with a solid formation.

We understand, nonetheless, that the criteria for the exercise of teaching are followed by legal and formal demands throughout the History of Education, and in the History of High Education. The criteria of high education teaching demand a formation for their exercise, and in each historical moment the formation makes itself be expressed differently, therefore revealing the professional needed for attending the society's demands.

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education nº 9394/1996 (BRAZIL, 1996) had a recognized importance in the amplification of interest in the field of teaching, when it established criteria for the exercise of teaching, as we can confirm in article 52, incise I, that "a third of the academic staff, at least, with master and doctorate degrees". In incise II of article 88, in transitory dispositions, a deadline of eight years is set "for institutions to fulfil the obligation".

The chapter VI of the referred law, which disserts about the education professional, in article 66 establishes that the demand for the exercise of high magisterium "shall be done in the level of post-graduation, preferentially in courses of M.D and Ph.D.". Thereby, the law establishes, for the exercise of teaching in high education, only the necessity of a formation in courses *stricto sensu*, nonetheless, being there scarcity of qualified personnel, it is admitted the teaching without the *stricto sensu* degree.

This legal demand, as for the formation of the high education teacher, is not new, as History in Brazil and worldwide has been showing, but today is translated in a new context. Since the decade of 1990, a differential is

added: the establishment of demands for the exercise of teaching and the verification of such demands in the criteria of evaluation of high education institutions, which contribute for the analysis of institutional quality.

Beholding such context, what do teachers say? Why do they look for courses of *Stricto Sensu* Formation, henceforth SSF? In this perspective, we question: which meanings are produced by high education teachers, and how to interpret the SSF meanings expressed by them? What must do those who seek the interpretation of meanings?

3. Seeking meanings: a theoretical-methodological path

The search for meanings puts us facing the subject that signifies and the context where the meaning is produced; social and historical context- history as facts that reclaim meanings-. As says Orlandi (1998), the Man is a historical subject, not only because he exists in a determined period, but because he makes history and attributes meaning to it. On the other hand, History, despite made by the subject, is not transparent to him; it is filled of meanings which reveal other discourses and other subjects, and other times, and other histories. In another paper, the author affirms, “when speaking, and giving significance, I signify myself” (Idem, p.28).

Hence, the work of who looks for the meanings goes beyond words, beyond the explicit. Meanings are, thereby, parts of a process. They happen in a context, but are not limited by it. “They have historicity, have past and project themselves in a future” (Idem, p.103).

We understand that the discourse does not cease to exist or closes inside itself; it articulates with other discourses and with the contexts where they are produced, once: “meanings are not born ad nihilo. They are created.” (Orlandi, 1998, p.103). And, being them created, their production is given by subjects that print meaning to things, facts, and to the world.

According to Orlandi (1998), the analyst must have the comprehension that meanings that can be read are not necessarily only in the object of reading. Meanings go through relations of a text with other ones, of subjects with others subjects, and of subjects with texts.

In the search for comprehending meanings, we listened to private high education teachers, who, at the time, expressed [or not] the wish to do a SSF, or are currently undergoing it. Which are the meanings they seek, profess and censor about the search for courses of strictu sensu post-graduation in the context of established demands.

As subjects of the research, we chose teachers who work at the private high education system, in private HEIs (High Education Institutions) for more than three years of teaching, and who are taking courses of stricto sensu post-graduation.

In order to confront the meanings teachers reveal in their search for formation, we also did interviews with teachers who work at private HEIs for more than three years, but neither possess a stricto sensu post-graduation degree nor are taking one, in order to identify the meaning of this formation for these subjects too.

For all these, we selected the interviewees in 3 (three) categories[†] (C), with a total of 15 (fifteen) interviewed teachers:

C1 – Those who joined the SSF after the educational reform, which is presented after the promulgation of LDB 9394/1996, and their comprehension through the institutional spaces in the context of demands experienced through external exams, and evaluation of the offer conditions of graduation courses. We considered this the target group of the research with intention to analyse the expressed reasons of the search for SSF spaces, and the meanings attributed to it. There were 10 (ten) selected teachers, from which 8 (eight) accepted to participate of the interview. The choice was made from a request to the department of personnel of the HEIs where the teachers were taking courses of stricto sensu post-graduation and that had more than three years in their institution, not taking to

[†] All teachers work at private HEIs in the state of Pernambuco/ Brazil. We established this mark of docent experience from the understanding of Huberman (2002). The docent career, once the definitive choice for it is made, is at the end of its first phase- Exploitation (three years) - when concerns and unsafeness give place to a new phase of surety.

consideration the course where they worked.

Throughout the interviews, two other categories emerged, which are:

C2 – Those who are willing to join SSF spaces. Our intention is of analysing the expressed reasons for the wish for these spaces of formation and the meanings attributed to the SSF. There were chosen 10 (ten) teachers, of which 4 (four) accepted to participate of the interview. These were picked from the observation of what they expressed informally about the wish of taking courses of *stricto sensu* post-graduation.

C3 – Those who are not willing to join SSF spaces. Our intention is to analyse the expressed reasons of such position and the meanings attributed to the SSF. There were chosen 5 (five) teachers, of which 3 (three) accepted to participate of the interview.

The type of interview was semi-structured, because it allows a process that, despite the existent guiding questions, permits a freer way, with space for interpellations.

The interviews had a first stage, which encompassed an initial research with the teachers to expose our objectives and then do the interviews. The interview's script was previously elaborated and consisted in 4 (four) items: General and Professional Data of Identification; Reasons for Joining High Education Teaching; Meanings of being a teacher in high education and Motives for the *stricto sensu* post-graduation. After the transcription, the interview returned so that the interviewed teachers could validate it, do modifications they judged necessary, authorizing the use.

Afterwards, we made the mapping of the data, which allowed us to identify a profile and answer to the research's unsettlements.

3.1. Who the teachers are: coming to a profile

As for age, the largest concentration is between 41 and 50 years old, being there six teachers, who act in HEIs for more than six years. As for salary, twelve of the interviewed subjects gain over ten minimum salaries [equivalent to \$3.276, 02 dollars]. These subjects are responsible not only for their living, but for their families', mainly if we take into consideration that ten of the twelve declared to have children.

Considering the end of the first graduation of the interviewed teachers, one finished college in the 1960 decade; five in the 1970 decade; five in the 1980 decade, and four in the 1990 decade. From the total of subjects, seven declared to have more than one graduation degree. Among the concluded graduation courses, the interviewed teachers went: three to Pedagogy; three to Entrepreneurial Administration; three to Letters, and the courses of Psychology, Economic Sciences, Teaching in Mathematics, Philosophy, Engineering and Social Studies had each one a subject. However, nine of the interviewed teachers concluded their graduation courses in the area of formation of teachers.

As for the ingression as High Education teachers, two said to have started in the 1970 decade; two in the 1980 decade; being the vast majority, eight, to have started in the 1990 decade, and three in the 2000 decade. Hence, teachers, in their majority, have at least six years of high education teaching, adding that to their accumulated experience, no longer being beginners, if we consider, for example, the phases of career as points out Huberman (2002). The period of four to six years would encompass the Stabilization, marked by the "consolidation of a repertory of basic practical skills, which bring safety in work, and professional identity" [author's translation] (*idem*, p.54).

The 1990 decade also holds the largest conclusion of *lato sensu* courses, once eight teachers declared to have taken them. From the three who claimed to have a master degree, two acquired it in the first decade of the XXI century. A fact is that these teachers' specializations, with one exception, happened when they already were teaching in high education institutions. Two of them joined a HEI in the 1990 decade, and claimed that having the master degree was an extra indicator considered relevant for their hiring. Such fact proves that most of decent formation was done in the 1990 decade, which is the decade of the educational reforms in the conjunct of political reforms performed in Brazil.

The teachers who possess a master degree had it done in the Education field. Two of the teachers initiated and stopped the SSF studies for financial issues, pointing to the huge difficulty in conciliating the wish for a SSF and the impossibility of resigning to do it.

We found in the interviewed teachers' answers that fourteen of them have a straight relation between the

discipline they teach and the graduation course they went to, and only one whose discipline relates to the completed SSF. Therefore, the graduation studies are the work referential, and not the SSF studies.

4. Teachers' discourses

4.1. Meanings expressed by teachers: beginning of high education work.

The work of teachers in Continued Formation (CF) courses is one of the criteria used by HEIs to hire, as well as the experience in public institutions and as teacher in the high education public sector. Are also observed the teacher's performance in case of temporarily replacing a HEI's teacher or whatever other services done for the HEI in other areas, and also the testimony of other teachers about the teacher's work in class, as we can visualize below:

I have already worked for a long time with teachers' training, so I already had a certain experience in dealing and supporting this process of formation in the State Secretary of Education, and then came the invitation (C1 teacher nº8)

We realize that the recognition of the developed professional practice is established from the privileged *locus* of teaching, the classroom, which comes to be the instrument of visibility of the docent's professionalism. It becomes evident due to the emphasis given by the institution when it takes as base the knowledge of professional experience.

The matter of recognition of competence means that a teacher builds himself in the practice he executes. Being a teacher is a process of forming oneself continuously; we build ourselves teachers in the action of teaching. Hence, the competence is recognized in the doing, a doing that simultaneously gives evidence of competence.

The C2 group and five C1 teachers point that their admittance in high education is related with their professional trajectory as teachers. It becomes clear when they bring forth their histories of professional life as teachers, telling how they started at magisterium and in other levels of teaching and went on developing activities in this docent doing. Despite these activities not being exclusive to the classroom, a mark of teaching recognition was printed through works such as CF and advisement, which means to say that we learn to be teachers and constitute ourselves teachers in the practice.

4.2 Expressed meanings about the SSF

In what concerns the SSF, the teachers point to an understanding of directed formation from the perspective Macedo (2001) works on, as a process that is built in the synthesis between the theoretical and the practical, but does not restrict itself to the technical dimension of the doing. This process comes as a need of upgrading and perfecting the contents of the initial formation, in the perspective of professional life: *"Trying each time more to go deeper, having a theoretical methodological basing. As I do the CF, I work as a professional in a more solid and consistent way"* (C1 teacher nº1).

Thereby, the formation inserts itself in the space of the profession's knowledge, which goes beyond the disciplinary, specific knowledges, and heads to a process of specialization of the function. We realize also the linking between formation and the profession's ethic, which implies specific knowledges and a constant study too. Once *"the teacher has to have the formation, be ethical, sensitive towards the student, and study a lot"* (C2 teacher nº4).

On that thought, the practice articulated with the ethical aspect should be rethought simultaneously with a look to the student, to his totality, which implies in rethinking the practice itself. Then, the formation lights the practice. Nonetheless, it cannot be any formation; it has to be the one that has the practice as a starting point for formation. The formation is a moment of reflection, of a professional self-review, and, in such perspective, the subjects say: *"I wanted formation, but not for the formation itself. I wanted something that connected to my practice"* (C1 teacher nº4).

On the other hand, we also found the SSF as a necessity that is established in the legal ambit, attached not to the question of a continuous process inherent to the docent activity, but as an obligation, an imposition that is justified by the Market's new demands, which establish the need for the SSF to teach in high education. The

teachers understand that the SSF becomes necessary in the perspective of safeguarding the job, as we observe in the following phrase: *“There isn’t a reason for joining the course [SSF]; it was what showed up. I got in to do whatever it is... As I was going on without the master’s degree, sometime they would brake me”* (C1 teacher n°3).

The attempt of keeping the job evolves to the search for the SSF, and it does not need to be in the docent’s area. Therefore, a formation is not pursued, but only the acquiring and guaranteeing of degrees. In the Market’s space of competition, possessing degrees is a requisite of differentiation and a condition of assured employability.

The fear of losing a job acts in several logics. From one point, it forces a disciplining of the teacher at the face of high levels of unemployment; from another standing point, it creates regulation for HEIs to gain or lose accreditation, therefore they institute the possession of degrees as one of the items of institutional evaluation (FELDER and IMEN, 2003). Besides the knowledge on the hiring of teachers more adequate for the styles of evaluation, as say Placco (2003) and Dias Sobrinho (2004), these logics have been pressing the pursuit for SSF degrees when it comes to curricula analysis.

Being so, the search for the SSF can be explained by the tension between the ‘degree discourse’, which brings a mark of distinction and professional differentiation, and the ‘formation discourse’, which is materialised as part of the process of professionalization in the reflection of social practices and construction of professional knowledges.

The comprehension that the legal demands for the exercise of teaching in high education- related to the SSF- is unnecessary to the teacher can be observed in the speech of a C1 teacher. He has a technical formation, and emphasises the importance of the specific knowledge learned in the initial formation. As to the exercise of teaching, he presents a super-valuation of experience. Experience, according to the teacher, is enough for formation.

To teach in the graduation I had to go through a SSF. One of the reasons was the legal demand, despite this demand being absurd, because it demands from teachers who have a large experience, who have a great teaching capability, who are teaching for 10, 20, 30 years, to have a master degree (C1 teacher n°2).

We can also find a tension between the need of a SSF that walks towards a pedagogical remake, and the legal demand of possessing a master or doctorate degree. There are those who recognize the importance of the SSF, but the current context exerted upon them a positive pressure, in the sense of forcing the teacher to admit that needs a process of constant study. However, in this process, many teachers face a new situation, the one of having accumulated experience considered outdated, and so, to fulfil what was legally instituted becomes imperious even if in spite of the search for formation, which gives visibility to the HEIs, proved by the professional formation of their docents and the updating of their practices.

So I think that this issue of practically impelling the teacher to have a master and doctorate degrees has a positive side, but, at the same time, it has a down side, and this side is exactly this: people with large experience- I know many- and nowadays are discarded for others who don’t even have experience, just because of a degree (C1 teacher n°4).

C2 subjects are also inserted in this meaning, but present as excuses for not being going through a SSF the life conditions that thwart a private HEI teacher to back from his activities without any cuts in salary, and to dedicate himself to the continued formation:

I would like very much, and feel impelled to do it [the SSF]. I started it out, and had to drop it because of a family need. To have a higher degree is a constant demand, and I must have it, but I cannot because my financial demands (family, my parents) make it impossible for me to leave an extensive work load such as mine (C2 teacher n°9).

The discourses bring the work conditions of the private HEIs’ teacher, who, for being paid per worked hour, needs to invest on his formation with losses to his payment. There is also an absence of encouraging organs in private HEIs, which are present in public HEIs, despite increasingly low on resources.

The teachers of the C2 group bring forth the difficulties to join SSF courses offered by public HEIs, which do not consider, when it is time for selection, the teaching experience of these professionals and their work conditions, demanding most of times exclusive dedication, an action that draws away any possibility of ingress.

I want the master degree. I think I have the teacher profile for having a master degree. I have been teaching in high education for over 10 years. I have been teaching in a general way for over 20 years, and I have taught in all imaginable courses: technical course, pre-vestibular[‡]. I have taught to other professionals, but they, the master course teachers, wanted someone who could give them full dedication and lots of production. With this fee-per-hour rhythm, how could I? (C2 teacher n°5)

What the discourses of the C2 group teachers do not say is that the HEIs do not offer or finance SSF courses for their teachers. Besides, the absence of investments comes through the recognition that the Market already has professionals with master and doctorate degrees, many of them who are from public HEIs, and retired teachers, who can be easily hired, already trained for the context of demands, with research experience and a production recognized by the Academy, “ready” for work in these institutions.

These institutions, because of the hiring protocols they take with their docents, can fire them without considering the experience and contributions given by the docents to the institution itself, and replace them by professionals that are more qualified, without the necessary investment from their part (Aragón 2000).

Thereby, the discourses silence about that the professional recognition once used for hiring is no longer worthy for maintaining the job or being hired today, in the private HEIs.

Nevertheless, we also found two C1 teachers and a C2 teacher, who even in this context of demands, when questioned about the reasons that triggered the search for the SSF, claimed that it was part of the teaching activity, inherent to it, as a moment of further learning, of honing knowledge. For this group of teachers there is a differential: they already have a master degree and are studying –or wish to study– in a doctorate degree course. In a certain way, for the level of established demands of the degree, they already fit in.: “*My concern about seeking continued stricto sensu formation is because a teacher must never stop, must be always studying. Our work object cannot stop*”. (C1 teacher n°4)

As professional activity, twelve teachers reported that they have more than one activity related to the educational process, being it referent to: consulting, formation instructor, teacher in other education levels, technical function in the Secretary of Education of Pernambuco, pedagogical headmaster, accompanying of research projects, coordinator of *lato sensu* post-graduation courses and graduation coordination.

Some of the teachers have another professional bond besides the one of teaching, and five of them work in a non-related to education activity, being them: System analyst, liberal profession, privet administrator and technological company administrator. It reflects in the construction of the docent identity, once teaching is a complementary function, secondary. The real profession lies somewhere else. Among the teachers, three of the C1 group claimed not to be teaches, but do teach to complement their profession. They do not show any identification with teaching and activities inherent to it. They do not have a teaching identity, as we observe in the expression below:

For me the education area will always complement the administration area. I am an administrator, in formation and vocation. I do not consider myself a teacher, the teaching routine is tiresome for me. This thing of having to teach on a daily basis, to have to correct tests, to have to welcome students, do planning. It still gets me tired (C1 teacher n°2).

Thereby, as Pimenta (2001, p.89) affirms: “a professional identity is built, then, from the profession’s signification, of the constant review of the profession’s social meanings” [author’s translation], and this construction, despite being social, is individually carried on. To claim to be a teacher is also saying to be nothing else, it is to claim as yours a pack of practices, values and beliefs that constitute themselves as of a determined group.

[‡] It is a type of quick course, which Brazilian high school students often take, in order to better prepare for the selection process, known as Vestibular, which grants them admittance in a high education institution.

1. Final considerations

The demand for master and doctorate degrees silences about the issue of the formation in the academic *ethos*. The discourse of the interviewed teachers brings the issue of obligation and not necessity, facing the Market's demands. The analysis of the 9394/96 law has similar outcomes, once the law only expresses the fulfilling of a dispositive, which, when presented, only legitimates the exercise of profession, but not the possibility of construction, perfecting and professional qualification. Not mentioning that, as says Canário (1999, p.46): "the acquisition of a pack of knowledges, the internalization of a group of values, and a domain of a set of technical gestures do not constitute pre-requisites susceptible to a linear transferability, determining professional action" [author's translation].

Debates about teachers' formation have intensified greatly throughout the last decades, and studies demonstrate that the required formation for the teacher surpasses the classroom pedagogical activity, centred in the didactical aspects that are limited by the doing for doing. (PIMENTA, ANASTASIOU, 2008), despite a few teachers pointed out to the movement of reflection on the practice.

The context of Educational Reforms, which took place in Brazil during the 1990's, alongside with the State Reform, brings a new element to debates: the establishment of teaching quality standards, and one of the criteria of standard quality is the teachers' formation in post-graduation courses, as a demand for the high education teacher. Such standards can be found in legal documents, for example the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, nº 9394/96.

The demand for formation in post-graduation courses, which is one the criteria of the HEIs' quality standard, has resulted in severe tension from the teachers, who face the necessity of having a post-graduation degree, considered to be urgent. On the other hand, we observed very few institutional initiatives in formation courses inside the own institution, or any investment in *stricto sensu* post-graduation for its teaching staff (PIMENTA, ANASTASIOU, 2008).

Being our aim to understand what mobilizes high education teachers to seek post-graduation formation, we believe this paper does not deplete the thematic, but it can contribute to the learning of the meanings attributed by the high education professional, who is in search for formation through courses of *stricto sensu* post-graduation.

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